GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:209
ANSWERED ON:22.11.2006
INDIAN PRISONERS IN PAK JAILS
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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Pakistan have released each other's prisoners during the last three years till date;

(b) if so, the year-wise number of prisoners released by each country, category wise;

(c) whether talks have been held for releasing the rest of the prisoners;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether several Indian fishermen and their boats are under Pak custody and any assistance is being provided to the families of these imprisoned fishermen;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHARJEE)

(a & b) Yes. India and Pakistan have released many prisoners in the last three years. In 2003, India released 20 Pakistani civilian prisoners and 93 fishermen while Pakistan released 38 Indian civilian prisoners and 623 fishermen. India also returned the body of one Pakistani prisoner who had died in jail. In 2004, India released 58 Pakistani civilian prisoners while Pakistan released 37 India civilian prisoners. In 2005, India released 159 Pakistani civilian prisoners and 222 fishermen while Pakistan released 125 Indian civilian prisoners and 1171 fishermen. In 2006 so far, India has released 61 Pakistani civilian prisoners and 59 fishermen while Pakistan has released 19 Indian civilian prisoners and 93 fishermen until today.

(c & d) Government has been taking up the issue of prisoners and fishermen with Pakistan. This issue was also raised at the Home Secretary level talks in Islamabad on May 30-31, 2006. Most recently, the matter was once again raised at the Foreign Secretary level talks held in New Delhi on November 14-15, 2006. As per the joint statement issued after conclusion of these talks, both the countries have agreed, on humanitarian grounds, to release all the civilian prisoners and fishermen, whose national status has been confirmed and who have completed their sentence, by December 25, 2006.

(e) Yes. As of now, 492 Indian fishermen and 300 boats are in Pakistan's custody.

(f & g) As per information available, Government of Gujarat and Diu Administration are providing Rs.50/- per day per fisherman to the families of fishermen facing detention in Pakistan.